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## CHARLOTTE HEALTH DEPARTMENT CELEBRATES NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION AND BREASTFEEDING AWARENESS MONTH



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**Port Charlotte, Fla.** – The Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County celebrates National Breastfeeding Awareness Month along with National Immunization Awareness Month in August 2020.

### **Breastfeeding Awareness Month**

During this month, we celebrate and advocate for the importance of breastfeeding. Research shows there are many benefits of breastfeeding for both baby and mother. For babies, being breastfed helps increase immunity for fighting off disease, promotes healthy weight and metabolism. There are also possible links to increased intellect and development.

Breastfeeding mothers are less likely to develop some diseases, such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancers. Mothers may also benefit from better sleep and decreased postpartum symptoms.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that mothers exclusively breastfeed for the first six months of life. They also recommend that mothers continue breastfeeding, with the addition of appropriate complementary foods until at least the baby's first birthday.

The Florida WIC and Nutrition Services Public Health Program actively promotes and supports breastfeeding. Local WIC agencies offer resources and staff to help breastfeeding mothers. Many local WIC agencies have International Board Certified Lactation Consultants with specialized knowledge of breastfeeding.

### **National Immunization Awareness Month**

You have the power to protect against vaccine-preventable diseases. Vaccine-preventable diseases are still a threat. Vaccination is the best protection. They are safe and effective at preventing serious diseases.

#### **Maternal Vaccinations**

Are you expecting? Some vaccines are recommended during pregnancy to help protect you and your baby. Pregnant women who get vaccinated pass antibodies to their developing babies, which protects them in the first few months of life.

## **Childhood Vaccinations**

Parents, well-child visits are essential in so many ways. Vaccines help provide immunity before children are exposed to potentially life-threatening diseases. One of the best ways to help keep your baby safe and healthy is by giving them all recommended vaccinations. Protect your child against 14 serious childhood diseases, like measles and whooping cough, by staying up to date on vaccines.

Every year, HPV causes over 33,700 cases of cancer in men and women in the U.S. The HPV vaccine can prevent many of those cases. You can protect your child long before they are ever exposed by getting them vaccinated around age 11.

## **Adult Vaccinations**

When it comes to discussions of vaccines, most think of children, but vaccines are important for adults as well. Do you know if you are up to date on your vaccines? You may need vaccines based on your age, health, conditions, job, or other factors. If you have a chronic condition such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease, getting sick with vaccine-preventable diseases, like flu and pneumonia, can lead to serious complications, hospitalization, or even death.

Visit your health care provider to see if you are up-to-date on your vaccines.

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## **About the Florida Department of Health**

The Department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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